



**St. Francis of Assisi Parish**  
Orland Park, Illinois

# Lector Procedures

## Highlights for 2022

- Lectors may sit together in the first row of pews to the right of the servers or with family members in the second or third pews.
- For your safety, please use the stairs behind the Presidential Chair. These stairs have an attached handrail, which may prove to be quite helpful.
- Please request a substitute via the Ministry Scheduler Pro (<https://www.sfaorland.org/liturgical-ministries.html>) even on the day of Mass, and especially for feast days. Please maintain Mass your preferences up to date.
- “The Word of the Lord.” should be proclaimed slowly and distinctly. Do not rush through this important closing.
- Read and Listen to the USCCB readings and podcast: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/>

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution document of Vatican II, describes the Holy Eucharist as the source and summit of our spiritual lives. It also teaches that God makes himself truly present during the Mass in the Eucharist *and* the spoken Word.

### God’s Presence in Communion and Proclamation

Eucharistic Ministers invite us to acknowledge the presence of God as they hold the host and speak the words “The Body of Christ”. In the same way, Lectors invite the congregation to acknowledge God’s presence in the Word by proclaiming “The Word of the Lord” at the conclusion of the readings.

To hear the Scriptures proclaimed is to hear the voice of God speaking – at that very moment – to the people gathered for worship. Our ministry is wonderfully important; God’s words become empowered for a congregation through the Lector. Some come to Mass carrying considerable doubt or personal wounds in desperate need of God’s healing Word. The language we use communicates much more than simple self help ideas - it imparts God’s grace – divine messages intended for God’s people. We lend God our voice so that His sacred scripture can achieve its purpose.

“Oh Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall  
declare your praise.”

**Psalm 51**

Therefore, our profound privilege and responsibility is to proclaim the Word of God, not merely recite it! We do this by bringing life, joy and meaning to the texts we read each week.

All of us are called to a full and active participation in the liturgy. As Lectors, we must model this participation for the congregation by our joy, reverence, dress, preparation and close attention to the liturgy. Importantly, we must take part in all forms of spoken and sung prayer throughout the Mass.

## Mass Procedures

### Microphone

We receive more feedback (no pun) on the effective use of the microphone than any other item. “B’s” “P’s”, and “T’s”, can sometimes “pop” loudly if the mic is directly in front of your mouth. Make a conscious effort to position it properly i.e. slightly above or below your mouth. Listen for your voice coming off the back wall of the church. We have never received negative comments about a Lector reading too loudly!

**Be sure to fill the worship space with your voice**

### Prior to Mass

Arrive in the ministers’ sacristy at least 15 minutes prior to Mass, sign in and inform the priest that you are one of the Lectors. In the rare occasion when there is **NO DEACON, Lectors will take two of his duties: reading the Universal Prayer (intercessions) and carrying the Book of the Gospels.**

Before the first Mass of the weekend (5:00 pm Saturday), you should find a copy of the Universal Prayer in the sacristy. Read all information carefully. Names are spelled phonetically for easier pronunciation – ask the presider for help, if needed. A former Associate Pastor gave me great advice about reading names: “*No matter what – just pronounce it with confidence – God knows who you are talking about.*”

Check the ambo. Adjust the microphone and ensure it is on.

## **Opening Procession**

**Take a Gather Hymnal from the ushers** – full, active participation requires Lectors to sing! Carry a hymnal in procession and use it for every song.

Next, line up with the other ministers behind the baptismal font. As you face the altar, you should be positioned behind the servers and in front of the Deacon and Priest.

**Book of the Gospels:** If a Deacon is assisting at the Liturgy, he will carry the Book of Gospels. In the rare event that a Deacon is not present, a Lector will be required to carry the Book of Gospels. The book should be lifted with both hands above your head and prominently displayed while in procession.

*(Most Cases)* **If you do not carry the Book of Gospels** – Both Lectors approach the altar in procession. As you pass the first pew, simply **stop** and **bow**, then proceed to your seats.

*(Rare Case)* **If you do carry the Book of Gospels** – Both Lectors approach the altar in procession. Stop as you pass the first pew (*continue holding the Book - do not bow*). Wait for the other Lector to bow (that Lector should then proceed to his/her seat). While holding the Book in a prominent position, walk to the back of the altar. Place the Book on the altar leaving enough space (~12 inches) between the edge of the altar and the Book so the priest has adequate room to venerate the altar.

## **Readings**

At the appropriate time, each Lector should **approach the ambo with reverence**. Walk slowly with hands folded.

### **Beginning the Reading**

Wait for the congregation to be seated, settled and attentive. Adjust the microphone.

### **Concluding the Reading**

A **prayerful pause** is required before saying “the Word of the Lord”. The intention is to allow our congregation a few moments to ponder the words you brought to them.

Please follow these steps: 1) take a step back from the ambo, 2) pause 5-10 seconds (do not rush this) and 3) motion toward the Lectionary with

outstretched hands and proclaim “The Word of the Lord.” This should be proclaimed slowly and distinctly. Do not rush through this important closing.

### **Second Reading**

Lector II should wait to approach the ambo until the Cantor has completed the responsorial Psalm (between the First & Second readings) and has exited the ambo area.

At the conclusion of his/her reading, Lector II should close the Lectionary and place it to the LEFT on the lower level of the ambo. This allows room for the Book of the Gospels.

### **Universal Prayer (Petitions)**

Petitions are read by the Deacon. This is no longer a duty of the Lector. However, you may be called upon to read them if no Deacon is present.

**IMPORTANT:** Lectors should *never add or subtract intentions* – particularly for the sick or deceased ***without the knowledge and consent of the presiding priest. No exceptions!***

**Announce no one** if the Mass intention listed is as “*The People of St. Francis*”.

After reading the final petition, turn and face the presiding priest. Remain at the ambo until the priest has finished the concluding prayer in order to avoid causing a distraction by walking in front of him. Return to your seat.

### **Closing Procession**

At the conclusion of Mass, pick up your hymnal and begin singing the recessional song. Stand at your pew and wait for the servers pass in front of you. As you follow them, move to the center aisle in line with the first row of pews and face the altar. Wait for the priest and Deacon to come and face the altar in front of you. Bow with the Presider and turn into the center of the aisle.

Reverently process out of the church following the servers.

Neither the Lectionary or the Book of Gospels) is carried during the closing procession. Simply use your hymnal.

# PROCLAIMING THE WORD – KEY POINTS

Before coming to your scheduled Mass, please take enough time to adequately prepare the readings.

**Preparation includes reading the passage aloud and more than once. This is very important!**

There is a need to not only let your mind become familiar with the ideas and words, but also to let the words "get around your tongue" as you practice the rhythm of the phrasing of the words. Otherwise even if you think you have prepared the reading, you will find yourself sometimes off-step in your verbal rhythm in the middle of a sentence – particularly in long run-on sentences.

Many of the sentences in the Pauline or other New Testament letters have to be **studied** and read very carefully and with a lot of emphasis in order for their meaning to be fully grasped by the congregation.

A Pronunciation Guide and brief explanation is given in the margin of the workbook. This is very helpful in understanding and communicating what you are proclaiming. **Speak distinctly and at a slightly slower than average pace.** The readings should not be rushed.

**Voice inflection is important.** Try to capture the congregation's imagination along with their attention.

**Eye contact is also very important.** Looking up occasionally helps to hold the attention of those listening. Try to make eye contact with different sections of the church each time you look up. This helps people feel your reading is addressed to the entire congregation not simply the center section.

## **Dress Code**

Since you are a very visible part of the liturgy, your posture, actions and appearance should always be dignified. Please follow these approved guidelines for dress:

**"Business FORMAL" not "Business Casual":** "Business Formal" attire is defined at a minimum as: Men: (i) business suit with collared shirt and tie or (ii) slacks, sport coat with collared shirt and tie. Women: (i) business suit (pantsuit is acceptable); (ii) dress or (iii) blazer with collared shirt or sweater with skirt or tailored slacks.

In the summer (only) - we can waive the tie requirements for men!

## **Lending a Hand**

When you attend Mass “off duty”, it is always helpful to check and make sure *at least one* Lector is in attendance and prepared to read. You are not required to fill in as a *second* Lector (although, if that person does not show up, you should feel free to do so).

While the absence of both Lectors is relatively rare, it is important to make sure that our ministry is represented at every Mass. All of us have that responsibility.

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### **PRAYER OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD**

*From the lectors of Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish, Singapore*  
(In Preparation)

Lord, invest me with your power  
as I prepare to proclaim the marvel of your message.  
I have prepared my reading,  
I have tried to take within me  
the meaning of what I am about to proclaim.

Help me to proclaim, not just with my lips,  
but with my whole heart and soul.  
Lord, make me a hollow reed  
so that your voice will be heard by all who hear me.

Free me of excessive concern over my performance.  
Convert my feeling of nervousness and  
turn all my apprehension into energy  
for proclaiming your Word with power and authority.

May your Spirit live in me and  
fill the Holy Word that I proclaim!

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### **Lector Coordinators**

Jim Walsh ([jwalsh177@gmail.com](mailto:jwalsh177@gmail.com)) Pat Flynn ([Pflynn@bretzlawoffice.com](mailto:Pflynn@bretzlawoffice.com))

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